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Message Text

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20
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 CU-04

IO-13 OMB-01 RSR-01 SR-02 ORM-03 /101 W
---------- 033916
R 221101 Z JUN 73
FM AMCONSUL LAHORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9635
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK
SUBJECT: PUNJAB MOOD RE BANGLADESH RECOGNITION

REF: LAHORE 1251 OF 12/22/72

BEGIN SUMMARY: BANGLADESH RECOGNITION ISSUE IS AGAIN BECOMING SUBJECT OF SOME EMOTIONAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN PUNJAB. OPPOSITION WOULD BE ABLE TO MARSHALL SIGNIFICANT BLOCKING EFFORT HERE IF BHUTTO LAUNCHES RECOGNITION DEBATE IN NEAR FUTURE. IF HE MOVES WITHOUT WARNING, HOWEVER, OPPOSITION EFFORTS MAY BE CONTAINABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. EVIDENCE IS ACCUMULATING THAT PRESIDENT BHUTTO MAY HAVE FAIRLY ROUGH SAILING IN PUNJAB SHOULD HE ATTEMPT TO MOVE ON BANGLADESH RECOGNITION IN NEAR FUTURE. ISSUE HAS REMAINED IN BACKGROUND FOR MOST OF PERIOD SINCE LAST DECEMBER' S STUDENT TROUBLES HERE (REFTEL), BUT HAS RE- SURFACED IN RECENT WEEKS.

2. CURRENT PUNJABI INTEREST IN PROBLEM STARTED WITH FRONT-PAGE ITEM IN LAHORE OPPOSITION PAPER JAMHOOR ON 7 JUNE WHICH CLAIMED BHUTTO GOVT WAS PREPARING TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH. PAPER SAID PRESIDENT HAD RECENTLY CONVENED MEETING OF PPP MNA' S
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IN NATHIAGALI HILL RESORT TO DISCUSS RECOGNITION STRATEGY,
AND LATER MET WITH PPP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP IN ISLAMABAD.
DECISION REPORTEDLY WAS THAT A PPP MNA WOULD RAISE SUBJECT
DURING CURUINT SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SEEK PARLIAMENTARY
APPROVAL FOR RECOGNITION. ON 11 JUNE OPPOSITION PAPER NAWAI
WAQT CLAIMED THAT BHUTTO DISCUSSED MATTER WITH PUNJAB MPA' S,
BOTH PPP AND NON- PPP, DURING HIS ONE- DAY VISIT TO LAHORE JUNE 9
AND WAS TOLD VOTERS WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT.

3. PRESS REPORTS BROUGHT FORTH BARRAGE OF STATEMENTS, THREATS
AND WARNINGS FROM ANTI- RECOGNITION CAMP HERE. AS USUAL, LEAD
WAS TAKEN BY JAMAAT- I- ISLAMI (JI) WHEN ITS NATIONAL LEADER
STRONGLY CRITICIZED IDEA. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, JI STUDENT
ORGANIZATION CHIEF DECLARED AT LAHORE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT
STUDENTS WOULD UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSE GOVT ON THIS ISSUE (INTERESTING
TO NOTE THAT GOVERNOR KHAR ORDERED ALL PUNJAB COLLEGES AND UNI-
VERSITIES TO CLOSE JUNE 16 RATHER THAN ON USUAL EARLY JULY
DATE). A NUMBER OF OTHER STUDENT LEADERS (NON- PPP) HAVE ISSUED
SIMILAR STATEMENTS. DURING FOLLOWING WEEK, WHILE OPPOSTION
PRESS EDITORIALIZED AGAINST RECOGNITION, TEHRIK- I- ISTIQLAL
LEADER, RETIRED AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN, DEVOTED TYPICALLY
FLAILING ATTACK AGAINST BHUTTO AND GOVT TO ISSUE OF B. D.
RECOGNITION; SUBSEQUENTLY, DURING JUNE 22 TEHRIK POLITICAL
RECEPTION IN LAHORE FORMER AIR MARSHALL MAINTAINED NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY HAS NO AUTHORITY TO EXTEND RECOGNITION OR DISCUSS ISSUE.
TEHRIK HAS ALSO PRINTED ANTI- RECOGNITION ADS IN OPPOSITION
PAPERS, AS HAS ANOTHER ORGANIZATION WHICH TERMS ITSELF " MOVE-
MENT FOR LIBERATION OF EAST PAKISTAN". MEANWHILE, OVER PAST
2 WEEKS, CONGEN EMPLOYEES HAVE NOTED GROWING NUMBER OF ANTI-
RECOGNITION SLOGANS PAINTED ON HOUSES AND WALLS AROUND LAHORE.

4. COMMENT: NON- PARTY PKISTANI OBSERVERS WHO HAVE TALKED
TO US RECENTLY ABOUT RECOGNITION APPEAR TO AGREE THAT PUNJABI
PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON THIS CONTENTIOUS ISSUE ARE HARDENING SOME-
WHAT IN ABSENCE ANY SOLUTION TO POW PROBLEM. EVEN PPP MEMBERS
PRESENT IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS ADMIT THAT PUNJABI ATTITUDES ARE
CONTINUING TO MAIE IT DIFFICULT FOR BHUTTO TO RESOLVE PROBLEM.
OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO BE ABLE TO MUSTER CONSIDERABLE ANTI-
RECOGNITION FORCES IN PUNJAB CITIES, PROBABLY POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO REQUIRE MAJOR GOVT EFFORT TO NEUTRALIZE. TIMING
REMAINS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR. IF BHUTTO SIGNALS HIS INTENTIONS
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IN ADVANCE, OPPOSITION HERE WOULD HAVE TIME TO MARSHALL
SIGNIFICANT BLOCKING EFFORT. IF, HOWEVER, PRESIDENT ACTED
WITHOUT WARNING, WE THINK OPPOSITION EFFORTS AFTER RECOGNITION
HAD BECOME FACT WOULD BE CONTAINABLE.
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